



WARDROBE THAT WORKS

O. A. R. D. C.

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Wardrobe That Works

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What do you want your clothes to do for you and for your family? Are they doing it? If not, what can you do to make each family member's clothes work for him or for her?



*I don't
have a
'thing'
to wear.*

Chances are the clothes aren't working very well if you make the above complaint. This seldom means that you really have no clothes to wear; it means that you don't feel well-dressed or confident in your clothes. Maybe the clothes don't fit. Maybe they aren't as fashionable as you want. Maybe they aren't becoming in style, texture, or color. Maybe you have nothing that is appropriate to wear to a particular place or special event.

Or perhaps the clothes need some repair—a zipper replaced or a seam restitched. Oftentimes a person has a lot of clothes but has failed to put them together in outfits that are coordinated for a total look. Examine your clothes and accessories. Decide what else is needed for them to work in your wardrobe.

*I don't want those
old man clothes.*



Maybe you don't need traditional clothes in your wardrobe. For instance, do you have to have a business suit to be well-dressed for your job? Or for your church? Or for your social life? If not, don't buy it. A wardrobe that works for you should have complete outfits that will take you where you want to go and need to go, giving you a feeling of well-being.



No! Leave it on!

A small child wants clothes that he enjoys. He may like a cowboy hat even if it doesn't go with the rest of the outfit. He may insist on wearing a dirty T-shirt with a tiger on it to bed. He'll learn later about appropriate dress. It's important that he be proud of his clothes and of himself. Clothes can give a person a feeling of security.



Permitting a girl to wear clothes she likes may prevent hurt feelings, even fights. Clothes add to a child's happiness, poise, and confidence and help her to become a well-adjusted adult. At an early age, a child should help choose the clothes to be worn. Perhaps the child can make the final choice from a group of several equally satisfactory garments selected by an older person.

Clothes really are important!



For young or old, adult or child, male or female—clothes are important. Clothes can make you feel miserable, or they can make you feel great. The purpose of this bulletin is to help you think through your present wardrobe and your habits regarding clothing selection and coordination, and to arrive at a pattern of action that will enable each family member to have a wardrobe that gives satisfaction.

WARDROBE CYCLE

The ability to dress well can be acquired if you work at it! It means a lot of effort and planning. It takes continual time, thought, and care to have suitable and attractive clothes for all members of the family to wear wherever they go. This is true whether you spend a large part or a small portion of your income for clothes.

Planning not only can help you to be well-dressed but can help you to save money. By planning you can have just enough clothes and not too many. Every family member should be able to be well dressed for every occasion. Well-planned wardrobes help people to be happy, poised, and self-confident and to have a good time wherever they go.

Begin now to develop a family wardrobe that works. Go through the wardrobe-assembling cycle—look at, shape up, ship out, and build on.

LOOK AT . . .

. . . Yourself

(and Other Family Members)

What are you like—psychologically and physically? Are you large? Are you small? Are you dark? Are you light? Do you prefer bright colors? Or are dull colors more to your liking? Do you know what certain colors do to your personal coloring—eyes, hair, complexion? Do you like solid colors? Or do you prefer prints, plaids, checks, and other patterned fabrics? Do you prefer classic or high fashion clothes? Tailored or frilly styles? Suits or casual sport jackets?

You might wear more than one type, but you probably like some styles more than others. Do you like clothes that take little care? Do you enjoy spending time on extra touches? Do you like to dress like others in your group? Or do you like to be distinctive in your dress? Do you really want to look your best at all times? Or do you care how you look? Do all of the members in your family feel the same way about clothes? Or are there some differences?

Do you like lots of clothes? Or would you rather have just a few clothes? One standard bit of advice for women is to buy a good basic dress that can be worn everywhere by varying it with accessories. Men are often told to buy a good blue suit. However, this may be nonsense if you don't like basic clothes. You may prefer having more decorative and patterned clothes and wearing basic accessories. Or, you may have lots of lovely and distinctive accessories to make less costly garments look good on you. Thus, analyze yourself and decide which coordination route you prefer.

So, know yourself. Know your size, coloring, shape, and what features to emphasize. Consider how to bring out your best qualities by selecting becoming colors, styles, and textures. Also, be realistic about your preferences. This honest appraisal will help you to build your wardrobe around you and your family.

. . . Your Clothing Needs

Where do you go? Do you need only casual clothes? Do you need dress-up clothes? Does your job require special clothing—perhaps a uniform? For how many different types of activities or occasions do you need clothes? Perhaps you need clothes for shopping, for church, for meetings, for at home. Sometimes we neglect the “at home” clothes. Do you need special outfits for square dancing, horse riding, or playing tennis or golf?

. . . Your Present Wardrobe(s)

After looking at yourself inside and out, and at your clothing needs, then look at your present wardrobe. Have you been making clothing selections that go along with what you have learned about yourself? Do you like the clothes you have? A wardrobe that works would make you feel at ease. It would bring out your best physical features and minimize your less desirable ones. It would include becoming colors, textures, and lines. It would include clothes that fit. It might help when doing your checking if you and other family members actually would try on the clothes. This will help you to determine into which of three groups to put the clothes—the quite acceptables, the usable if, and the rejects.

Do you have at least one complete outfit that is appropriate for each different type of activity in your way of life? Does every family member? Do all have complete outfits? Or just clothes? You may find that you have lots more clothes than you thought you had. But, are they all working for you?

. . . Your Resources

Finally, look at your resources other than clothes and accessories. Do you have the skill to sew new clothes? Or to remodel old ones? Do you have the necessary time and energy? How much money will you have available for clothes? Families tend to spend 5 to 15 percent of their income on clothing.

SHAPE UP . . .

. . . Your Planning

A wardrobe that works would have at least one attractive, becoming, and comfortable complete outfit for each occasion or different type of activity for which you need clothes. If you don't have such a great wardrobe, then see that you do. This is where the "shape up" comes into the picture. A little paper and pencil work or planning may get you off onto the right track. Fill in the chart in this bulletin. You may want to do additional sheets for other family members rather than to crowd all into this sheet.

First, list the activities or occasions for which you need clothes. Categories might be informal social evenings (dinners out, movies), dress-up affairs (weddings, church, banquets), sports activities (swimming, camping, tennis), spectator sports (ball games, hockey), shopping (near home and at a distance), and work (at home and away from home). Next, list the acceptable clothes you have for each category. Then fill in the accessories that go with the clothes to see if you have complete outfits for each activity grouping. If you find that your outfits are not complete, then get busy.

. . . Your Unwearables

Could any of the clothes you sorted as being "usable ifs" be shifted into those that are wearable? Do some need repair? This might include garments with tears, holes or snags, garments with ripped hems and seams, and garments with missing or broken buttons and other fasteners. Are some of the clothes ones that you'll never wear again? Are they just hanging in your closet? Could you put two of them together to make a layered look or could you use one or more to make some other garment, even for another family member?

Perhaps poor fit makes some of the clothes unwearable? If they were altered, could they be made to fit you? Perhaps the clothes are no longer fashionable? Could you add a new accessory for a current look?

. . . Your Decisions

Develop the ability to make satisfying choices among alternatives. Think of fashion, care, construction, fit, becomingness and possible coordination with the rest of the wardrobe. Have a definite end in view. Don't let sale items or other people take you off course. Take

WARDROBE PLAN

In the left hand column, list the occasions for which you need clothes, leaving space between each for listing outfits in your wardrobe. If outfits are not complete or you have nothing to wear for an activity, fill in the additions needed and circle them. Put these on your shopping list.

[illegible]

time to shop, to look at fashion pictures with yourself in mind, and to try on different garments before making your final decision. Avoid impulse buying.

Know fashion directions so you will not be caught with new out-of-fashion clothes unless you know you will soon wear them out, or your children will soon outgrow your choice. Avoid being a slave to fashion. Instead select only becoming versions. Beware of fads. They have a short life, but they may give zing to your wardrobe if not too expensive and you expect to wear them a lot.

If money is short, select clothes that can do double duty. Tweeds, flannels, and double knits are less limiting than brocades, metallics and velvets. Check the care label and fiber content label before buying. These are clues to fabric performance. The suggested method for upkeep may cost more than the garment and may influence your decision.

Does construction of a garment affect the way you feel about the garment? If you can't stand puckered seams, unmatched plaids, undercollars that show, then don't buy them. Or be willing to live with them for the intended purpose. Assume the responsibility for your decisions and live with them rather than fret about them.

Beware of garments that do not fit. Do you have adequate skill to alter them? Or can they be altered without ruining the appearance of the garment? For instance, to alter the neck and shoulder areas of a jacket is a bit complicated. Making the waistline of dress or pants smaller is relatively easy.

Why wear something that does not enhance you? You may think you will like it. But do you? Or are those unbecoming clothes among the ones you don't wear? Perhaps your decision should be to leave the garment in the store if it isn't flattering. Or maybe you could add a becoming accessory. Sometimes a bit of becoming color as in a tie or scarf is enough.

There's no one way to look; no one way to put it all together. Nevertheless, do you do it according to a theme or so you have a total outfit, a complete picture? For instance, all the parts—shoes, purse, suit, jewelry, and so on—are considered in relation to each other and to you. For example, a suit made of a tweed fabric with a sporty textured look needs shoes and other accessories in lines, colors, and textures which carry through the casualness of the tweed.

Avoid carrying a bulky sport bag with dressy clothes. In this era of mixing patterned fabrics, be sure you don't look like a clown. Also, avoid carrying a decorative bag such as one made of multicolor patches with a dress or blouse made of a large flowered print. Patterns should not be competing for attention but should blend into a total look.

SHIP OUT Your Rejects

Get rid of unwearable clothes. There's no need to continue cluttering your closet with clothes that are not working for you or have no potential for doing so. Maybe another person could use them. But be sure that you cannot remodel them in some way. If you like the fabric and it is in good condition, surely, with a little imagination and skill, you can recycle the garment into a wearable one. Maybe it will be later rather than right now. However, now may be the time, if you are enthusiastic about some possibilities for recycling.

Do you have a mini-dress that is just too short? Turn it into a top to wear with pants. Experiment, too, and find the length which is most pleasing. Some old shirts in the closet can be changed to shirt jackets. Cut off the shirt tail and cuffs, then stitch on rib-knit fabric or banding in their place. Could that old prom formal be used for fabric for a party dress for your daughter? An old sweater could be used to make a cap. Of course, your time and sewing skill must be considered in determining whether clothes can be made "active" again.

. . . An Analysis of Your Rejects

If after careful analysis you still decide to "ship out" some of your clothes, be sure you know why you are discarding them. Is it because they have been outgrown in either length or width? Or is it because something unexpected has happened? Your likes have changed? The fashion did not last long? Or does a new job require different kind of clothes? Is your way of life different than it was? Or is it because you made a not-so-wise choice? Or was the fabric hard to clean, or didn't it wear well? Was the construction of the garment poorer than you could live with? Perhaps the color or style was not becoming or the garment never fit. Maybe you just never liked the garment. You may have bought it in a hurry. Or, someone else may have talked you into buying it. Try to decide why the garment or accessory was not satisfactory. If the reason was due to poor choice that could be avoided, it would be a shame to make the same mistake again. Shape up so you won't have to ship out any new purchases.

While some rejects were failures, some clothes may be just worn out because of frequent use. What among those discards were successes? Why? Pleasing color, style, comfortable fit? Decide what was especially desirable so you can consider a duplicate or similar item for any new clothing selection or purchase as you build on your wardrobe.

BUILD ON . . .

. . . For Completeness

Add your have-to-haves before your want-to-haves. By now you know yourself, your activities, and the clothes and accessories that are wearable. You even have listed your clothes to see if you have complete outfits. Do you have at least one outfit for each activity? There is nothing wrong with having more than one. In fact, you may want several outfits that are appropriate to wear to work or to wear shopping. Just be sure you have at least one to wear to each kind of place you go.

Perhaps the first clothing items you add to the wardrobe should be the ones needed to make complete outfits. This would be especially true if you had no other outfit to wear for that occasion. This may be only a small item such as hose to go with a gray coat and dress, or it may be dark red socks to go with a cranberry sport coat and slacks outfit.

Maybe you need to make a big purchase such as a coat to wear with dress-up clothes. Hopefully, every family member would not need an expensive item at the same time. If so, priorities may have to be set. Consider which need is the greatest. Have the children outgrown their clothes? Does a parent need the item to maintain appearance while on the job? Is the item necessary for body protection? Decide how you best can meet the other needs. Could you buy some used items? Could you make something cheaper and as good as that which you can buy? Can you wait awhile to purchase a new item? Try, though, to avoid having the same family member always be the one that has to wait, do without, or wear used clothing.

. . . . For a New Outfit For a New Need

There may be occasions when a special event or new hobby warrants a totally new outfit. You may be selecting the total from top to toe. Again, plan and build a complete outfit. You will want to relate all parts to what is best for that ensemble and not worry about whether parts can be utilized for something else. By this careful choosing, the results will be a successful outfit which you will enjoy. However, you can consider the potential for other uses in your wardrobe, too. If either metallic leather sandals or black patent sandals will look equally well with a new formal outfit, which shoes might have other uses for dress wear? Would that multicolor sequin clutch or black-beaded purse be best?

. . . For Fashion Newness—Update

You do use clothes from past seasons to get the most mileage from them, but there is no reason to look “old hat.” Do some analyzing to determine what fashion touches might be added to past seasons’ outfits. Get acquainted with the new fashion messages. Maybe it’s a pile-up of garment layers or accessories, such as sweater sets or varying lengths of beads or chains. If so, perhaps buying one or two pieces to relate to the outfit will be all the additions needed to add fashion newness. Perhaps the skirt length has new emphasis or the separates theme is in vogue. Consider, do you have outerwear to go with, say, a longer skirt length? Or, are you willing to add a new coat or remodel one to have a coat in the longer length?

In other words, relate fashion to you and to your wardrobe, so any new fashion garment you select adds to the total ensemble rather than having a detracting effect or even doing away with the complete-outfit look already in existence. Knowing and using the potential of each new fashion look and relating it to you, can make the difference between the look of yesterday and that of today.

. . . . For Individuality

Consider additions to add spark and interest to your outfits. This might be a new scarf or belt that transforms the average or commonplace to a distinctive look. Fabric motif or cut of a garment may add zest to an ordinary outfit—one that you will enjoy wearing because of that special feature.

The touch of individuality does not follow rules but is a personal expression of the unique without the repetition of the “ordinary.” You can convey a certain mood or message of a personal fashion concept—maybe a distinctive color combination of red, yellow, and purple instead of a one-color harmony. Perhaps a trim or accessory adds that right touch such as ribbon streamers in as many colors as the print motif of your little girl’s dress. Use your ingenuity in placement of accessories or even the way you wear clothes for an individualistic look.

If garments are sewn at home, your fabric choice may be the way to create a special outfit. Borders, prints, textures, coordinating fabrics, are yours to create exciting combinations.

. . . With Wise Decisions

Regardless of your need for built-ons, take time to shop; take time to look at fashion pictures with yourself or your family in mind. Try on different garments before making your final decision. For instance, if a shirt is needed to complete a sport outfit, take time to try

on several, with the other parts of the outfit if possible. Explore what's available at various stores. Which is the most becoming color for you and relates to the rest of the clothes? Do you like the style? You may find one or two "bests" among the many shirts on the store racks. If you choose the most becoming shirt for you, you not only will be using your clothing dollars to best advantage, you also will enjoy wearing the outfit by choosing the most complimentary item among the alternatives.

Think twice before buying a sale item. Does it fit into your wardrobe? Or will you have to spend more than it is worth to make it into a complete outfit?

Consider special features important to you. You can get more mileage from your clothing dollar by attention to style lines, and to features that lend themselves to style changes. Growth features—to add width such as elasticized waists and bodices, easy fit straight line garments; and to add length—such as wide hems and horizontal tucks—may be important to you in selecting children's clothing. For the boy and girl in the family a coat with reverse closures may be a good investment that one can wear and the other can "grow into" and wear later. What performance features are you most interested in? Easy care for child's coat? Wrinkle resistant shirt? Soft, slinky fabric, but washable for a party dress?

And look for extras that make the difference—quality construction and simplistic but distinctive style detailing. Some items can do double duty, but use caution when you select clothing items for their versatility. Items chosen to go with everything may not go with anything—and the color even may not be becoming to you! Also remember, cleanliness, carefulness, and carriage in the wearing of clothes help your wardrobe work for you.

Never-Ending Process

Collecting a satisfying wardrobe is a continuous process. Look at, shape up, ship out, build on, look at again, and add to. Even if you aren't working at it most of the time, you should go through the wardrobe-assembling cycle at the beginning of each season. Your plan and action in clothing choices should suit your personal characteristics, your purpose, and your purse.

Goal—Assemble wardrobe that works for you.

Situation—Know you, your clothes, and your needs.

Decisions—Select from alternatives clothes and accessories for complete outfits.

Evaluation—Evaluate total outfits. Determine reasons for successes and failures so you can continue to reach your goal.

Wardrobe Workers

- Have a definite end in view. Use what you have to get what you want. Make clothes and accessories into complete outfits that work.
- Assemble at least one complete outfit for each occasion. Be sure everything in the outfit, including coat and shoes, go together.
- Think in terms of outfits when you select new garments and accessories. Buy for outfits and not just individual items.
- Correlate the colors from season to season. Many of today's clothes can be worn in either summer or winter; select lightweight and heavy-weight coats to go with the same clothes.
- Use a theme or key color for each activity grouping. Dress-up clothes need not use the same basic color as active-sport clothes since the items would not be worn together anyway.
- Select either basic garments or basic accessories. They can be major building blocks of fashion outfits. A basic coat is a wise choice in either case.
- Buy clothes that you enjoy. This includes style, color, fabric, fit, and workmanship.
- Choose becoming clothes. Color, texture, and line should make the most of your skin, hair, eyes, and body build.
- Know fashion directions so you can choose becoming fashion items to update outfits that build into your wardrobe.
- Include separates. If carefully selected to coordinate, the interchanging gives you additional outfits.
- Consider the number of times you will wear a new garment. If many times, you may want to buy a better quality than if only a few times.
- Combine patterned fabrics and accessories with caution. Be sure they are not competitive and ruin a total look.
- Avoid impulse buying. It may rob you of something you need to complete an outfit.
- Shop around. Study advertisements and catalogs. Prices on about the same item may vary a lot. The first one you see may not be the best buy for you.
- Avoid having many similar outfits. Of course, if your job requires uniforms, you will have no choice.
- Get the most out of your clothes. Hang them, air them, keep them repaired and pressed. Remodel them for additional use.

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